

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace paragraph 0026 with the following rewritten paragraph:

-- The substrate 10 ~~includes~~ includes, but is not limited to: any semiconducting material such as conventional Si-containing materials and other like semiconductors. The term "Si-containing material" is used herein to denote a material that includes silicon. Illustrative examples of Si-containing materials include, but are not limited to: Si, SiGe, SiGeC, SiC, polysilicon, i.e., polySi, epitaxial silicon, i.e., epi-Si, amorphous Si, i.e., a:Si and multilayers thereof. A preferred Si-containing material of the substrate 10 is Si. A polish stop layer 4 may be deposited atop the substrate 10, in which the polish stop layer 4 functions as a stop layer during subsequent chemical mechanical planarization (CMP) processes. The polish stop layer 4 is typically a nitride, such as Si₃N₄, and may have a thickness on the order of about 80 nm.--